

Children's Cabinet
Work Group on Early Childhood Development and School Readiness

Introductory Meeting

Wednesday, August 8, 2018

3:00 – 5:00 PM

Patrick Henry Building, West Reading Room

1111 E Broad St., Richmond, Virginia 23219

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Rosa Atkins, Grace Creasey, Andrew Daire, Cornelia Deagle, Lisa Specter Dunaway, Shikee Franklin, Kathy Glazer, Emily Griffey, Tiffany Gordon, Lisa Howard, Kim Hulcher, Ben Kiser, James Lane, Anne-Marie Twohie, Rebecca Vinroot, Dottie Wells, Angela Wirt

Members Absent: George Cunningham, Michael Martin, Duke Storen

I. Introduction

Lieutenant Governor Fairfax and First Lady Pamela Northam welcomed the participants to the work group meeting and provided remarks. The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the work of the First Lady and her staff, as well as Jenna Conway – the new Chief School Readiness Officer. The First Lady discussed the importance of ensuring that all children have access to opportunities and how the participants of the work group can assist to support families and children.

II. Icebreaker

Jenna Conway led the group in an “icebreaker” exercise for participants to get to know one another. She explained that participants here have a shared focus in making sure that children are kindergarten ready, because school readiness will help them with school and careers later in life. Ms. Conway asked the participants to take a moment to describe—in one word—early childhood in Virginia.

III. Overview of Children's Cabinet

Connor Andrews provided a brief overview of what the Children's Cabinet is and how it operates as a cross secretariat body. He discussed the ways in which

participants of the work group can support the efforts and initiatives of the Children's Cabinet as it works to improve opportunities for children and families across the Commonwealth.

IV. Presentation and Discussion of Early Childhood Development and School Readiness in Virginia

Jenna Conway discussed the importance of thinking ahead to 2021. She discussed how there are many children living in poverty and the importance of implementing early childhood education and school readiness in Virginia. Ms. Conway discussed societal shifts that often times both parents are in the workforce now, and that there is a need for care and education. She highlighted data from 2017 that explained the relation between economic disadvantage and readiness. Additionally, other data and figures from the Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Project were discussed to highlight the areas for growth in self-regulation and social skills.

Ms. Conway explained various challenges on kindergarten readiness including literacy, math, social interaction, and self-regulation. She emphasized that these challenges go beyond just academic data and that readiness extends into social-emotional care as well as the ability to regulate emotions.

Participants emphasized the need to start discussing students' strengths and not just what they are lacking. Participants discussed past accomplishments, challenges, and what they would like to see developed in the area of early childhood development and school readiness by 2021. When discussing accomplishments in the field of early childhood development, participants emphasized VPI+, the Children's Cabinet, data, and funding among many other accomplishments. Discussion of challenges included conversations about how we utilize and use data and the accessibility to and availability of resources. The discussion of future goals included improving data sharing, improving coordination and cooperation across agencies and stakeholders, and increasing access to early childhood development resources.

V. Adjournment

The group closed the meeting by thinking ahead to how to refine big-picture goals and strategies.